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DE RUEHIN #0227/01 0501009  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 191009Z FEB 08  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
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UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000227

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S UN REFERENDA, U.S.-CHINA  
RELATIONS

11. Summary: As Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to report on the March presidential poll and the UN referenda, news coverage on February 16-19 also focused on the "Taiwan Goal," a defense industry company the DPP administration has recently set up to coordinate the business of U.S.-Taiwan arms deals; on the shooting of a former legislator; and on Kosovo's declaration of independence. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" urged the Taiwan public to vote and pass the two UN referenda proposed by the DPP and the KMT respectively. The article said the passage of the UN referenda will push the international community to start reviewing and revising the unrealistic one-China policy. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" also chimed in by urging Taiwan voters to put aside politics and vote for the two UN referenda. A separate "Taipei Times" editorial commented on Beijing's response to the alleged Chinese espionage case and concluded that "the Chinese, by virtue of their actions or habits, are close to spoiling for a 'Cold War.'" A "Taipei Times" op-ed, written by an Australian writer, discussed China's rise and said it is "bound to cause turbulence and strife in the years to come, with the US seeking to hold its position as the reigning superpower." End summary.

## 12. Taiwan's UN Referenda

A) "[The Island's] Bids to Join or Re-join the UN are a Common Wish Shared by the Taiwan People"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (2/16):

"... The DPP's and the KMT's moves to push for Taiwan to join and to re-join the UN, respectively, are both based on the fact that the island's UN bid has become a consensus among the majority of the Taiwan people and that both referenda have reflected the wish of mainstream public opinion. This newspaper has asserted many times in its editorials that the two UN referenda are aimed at maintaining Taiwan's independent sovereignty, which is the least common denominator for the island and is consistent with the interests of all Taiwan people. Currently, some countries are either opposed to or do not support Taiwan's UN referenda. This is mainly because of the obstruction created by China, but by no means does it indicate that the UN referenda were wrong. ...

"If the two UN referenda fail to pass simply because of the hindrance caused by external force, it will be akin to sending a signal to the international community that, if the Taiwan people want to decide their own destiny in the future, the move will be strongly boycotted by the external force which opposes such a decision. This is because the experience to suppress Taiwan's UN referenda [this time] will mislead others to believe that, as long as they sustain their suppression, the Taiwan people will yield and give up Taiwan-centric values. As it stands now, whether or not the UN referenda can pass will have a significant influence on Taiwan's

future. No one should overlook such an influence simply because the referenda are to be held in tandem with the presidential poll. All the more, no political party should play the role of an inside traitor that neuters the free will of the Taiwan people. ...

"Taiwan's democratic progress, from the direct vote of its president, the entire reshuffle of its legislative bodies, to the peaceful transfer of power, has fully highlighted that Taiwan is an independent, sovereign state, and that the Taiwan people are unanimous in maintaining such a status quo. It is a pity that, given the interference of the Chinese factor, the international community has yet to accept Taiwan, which thus cannot become a normal country. Under such circumstances, the referenda for Taiwan to join or re-join the UN are akin to having shouldered the responsibility of pushing for Taiwan to become a normal country. Should the referenda succeed in passing, it will deal a heavy blow to the fictitious one-China principle, and the international community will face up to such a reality and start reviewing and revising the unrealistic one-China policy. ..."

#### B) "Putting Politics Aside for the Best"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (2/17):

"While who wins the upcoming presidential election carries a lot of weight for Taiwan's future, what happens with the UN referendums will also affect the nation's path. If a referendum passes, it will have an enormous impact on Taiwanese foreign relations: China will threaten to implement the 'Anti-Secession' Law, flex its military muscles and apply pressure on the US, Japan and the EU to express opposition. If neither referendum passes, the international community might interpret it as a sign that the Taiwanese public has little desire -- or is downright opposed -- to joining or returning to the UN. Consequently, the doors of the UN could be closed for RELATIONS

good, bringing a calamity for Taiwan, a scenario of total defeat.  
...

"If the DPP and KMT have the nation's interests in mind, they should encourage voters to vote for both UN referendums. That will neutralize their effect on the election and create a win-win solution. If the KMT refuses to support the DPP referendum, then a solution to minimize damage should be adopted. The parties could come to a consensus and put forward a third choice, a replacement referendum, through the legislature. But time is short and this possibility is waning."

## 12. U.S.-China Relations

#### A) "Awaiting a 'Hot' Cold War"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (2/18):

"When Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao insisted at a press conference last week that China does not spy on the US and that Washington should get rid of its 'Cold War thinking' on the subject, an obvious response to his first claim was this: Do Liu and his bosses think Americans are complete idiots? As for the second claim, a more complex question follows: Given Beijing's willingness to use threatening language against Taiwan (officially) and Washington (unofficially, through media outlets and former officials or military figures), why are US-China relations not already being discussed in terms of a new cold war?

"The 'Cold War' reference is dubious and there are a number of reasons for this. Unlike the Soviet Union at the height of its power, China cannot begin to compete with the US militarily in global terms. But it does wish to compete in -- with a view to dominate -- the region. This is not necessarily interpreted by US politicians as hostile, especially given the mythology that has developed over Chinese history and its entitlement to 'great power' status. ... None of this changes the fact that the Chinese, by virtue of their actions and habits, are close to spoiling for a 'Cold War.' It is simply a function of time, wisdom and inclination as to when the Americans appreciate that a China under Communist Party control cannot take any other route, despite the Orwellian

blusterings of its spokesmen."

B) "China's Rise Will Mean Turbulence"

Sushil Seth, a writer based in Australia, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (2/19):

"The point is that China's rise is a great challenge for the world, especially the US, as the former has ambitions to overtake the latter as the world's only superpower. With the US mired in Iraq and elsewhere, China has used its time and resources well to expand its political and economic clout, even right into the US backyard of South America. One would hope that the US is aware of China's rearguard action. But being already over-stretched, the US is keen to maximize the area of political cooperation on Iran, North Korea and elsewhere. Washington is, therefore, inclined to overstate the mutuality of interest, and underplay differences and concerns from China. But this situation is unlikely to last as China becomes even more ambitious and the US starts to clearly see the danger. ...

"In other words, China's rise is bound to cause turbulence and strife in the years to come, with the US seeking to hold its position as the reigning superpower. There is, however, a view that China can be accommodated peacefully in the world order, because the existing system has been kind to it as evidenced by its economic growth and growing political status. Therefore, it will have no reason to subvert or sabotage it. But with China's growing ambitions, it is unlikely to be satisfied with incremental benefits accruing to it from a system that was devised by others to maintain and sustain their supremacy. Beijing will want to put its own stamp on the system and to maximize its own goals and ambitions of global supremacy. ...

"If China manages to remain stable and continues to grow (a big if, considering its multiple problems), it will also have the potential to play power politics with the global system, including between the US and Europe. The idea that China will play its role within an existing international order crafted and controlled by dominant Western powers seems a bit overdrawn, if not an outright case of wishful thinking. It would make more sense to treat China as a power keen to reshape the global order by putting itself in the center. China will take this direction as its power grows. And this will mean strife and turbulence. And countries like the US and others with high stakes in the existing international order will have no option but to confront the new danger from a resurgent China."

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